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SERVICE

USDA'S REPORT TO CONSUMERS

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE · OFFICE OF INFORMATION · WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

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OUTLOOK FOR 1964

More and Better Clothing. The year 1964 will be a good one for clothing shoppers. Supplies should be ample--and with little change in price, say family economists in the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Look for disposable bed sheets and pillowcases in hospitals, improved wash-and-wear cotton products, wool sweaters and blankets that can be washed by machine, permanently pleated wool skirts and permanently creased wool slacks and trousers.

Cost of Shelter, Household Goods. Housing and household equipment costs may be slightly higher in 1964 than in 1963, say U.S. Department of Agriculture family economists. Rents and home-purchase costs as well as general household operating costs appear to be increasing gradually. Mortgage money, however, is expected to remain plentiful and available on liberal terms. There'll probably be little or no change in interest rates.

FOOD COSTS

The Price of Food. Retail food costs probably won't go up much in 1964, say economists in the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Last year's 3 percent cost increase was due to several unusual circumstances--the Florida freeze, which resulted in reduced supplies of citrus fruits and winter vegetables, and an increase in sugar prices.

The Staff of Life. The price of wheat has little effect, or seemingly little relationship to the price of bread, a U.S. Department of Agriculture economist notes. If the price of wheat were suddenly to increase by \$1.00 a bushel, that increase would not raise by much more than one cent the cost of wheat represented in a pound loaf of white bread.



And conversely, if wheat prices dropped by a large amount. Little effect is likely on the prices consumers pay for bread. But if it were possible for the baking industry to reduce costs of baking and distributing bread by 3 or 4 cents a loaf--this would have more impact on the consumer's food budget than if the farmer started giving his wheat away, the economist added.

Go West Young Man. The continued flow of new products and process developments in the food field will mark the rest of the Sixties. Dehydro-freezing, foam-mat and vacuum puff drying and freeze drying are terms you'll hear more of, says the U.S. Department of Agriculture. New dehydration processing techniques will cut transportation and other marketing costs for foods produced far from markets, USDA specialists indicate. And, as a result, longer growing seasons, which permit processing plants to operate longer, will become more important in the location of new plants. Most likely spot? The West, particularly the Pacific Coast area. This can mean that the West may gain more in the production of new processed foods relative to other regions.

FOOD FACTS

Plentiful Foods for January. Here's a list of food you'll find abundant at local markets as the New Year gets under way. Top of the list are canned corn and potatoes, followed by beef, pork, apples, pecans, peanuts and peanut products.

Money's Worth in Food. It's what you get out of foods that really counts. Breakfast cereals, ready-to-eat or cooked, are good buys in nutrition, point out U.S. Department of Agriculture home economists. Cereals give substantial amounts of many nutrients in return for the few pennies they cost per serving. Most ready-to-eat cereals contain amounts of the B-vitamins and iron comparable with or slightly higher than cereals cooked at home. They cost about one cent more per serving--28 cents a week for the family of four eating cereal every morning. Sugared and cocoa-flavored cereals generally cost one-half to one cent more per serving than other regular ready-to-eat kind.

Emergency Feeding. How much food would the U.S. have on hand in wholesale warehouses in an emergency? A U.S. Department of Agriculture survey shows a 16-day supply. To make it last this long, a basic diet of 2,000 calories of food would have to be followed. A person would also need about 32 ounces of liquids a day. Only 4 days supply of non-concentrated fluids are on hand, the study showed. However, back of the stocks in warehouses, the supply line is filled with food moving from farm and ranch through processing plants to wholesale and retail stores. For a free copy of the report, "Estimated Number of Days' Supply of Food and Beverages in Warehouses at Wholesale, 1963," send a postcard to the Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250, ask for MRR-632.

PLANTS

Azaleas the Year Round. You'll soon be seeing azaleas blooming at florist shops any time of the year. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has developed a series of special treatments that make potted azaleas bloom whenever the florist wishes. Cooperating nurserymen are now experimenting with these treatments and a few plants have already reached the public.

Plants from the USSR. The first American plant explorers allowed in Russia since 1929 have brought back propagation stocks of many fruits potentially valuable to U.S. Agriculture. The men, Drs. John L. Creech and Donald H. Scott, USDA horticulturists, returned from a 45-day trip with bud shoots from wild apples, pear and cherry trees, as well as a new grape variety and many ornamentals. The tree fruit collections should prove valuable in developing improved varieties of fruits and hardier, more drought-resistant root stocks.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Corner Storage in Kitchens. A lot of storage space is lost in the corners of kitchen wall and base cabinets. To make maximum use of these areas, housing specialists in the U.S. Department of Agriculture suggest the use of revolving cabinets. A new leaflet shows how these cabinets work and how they can be built into various kitchen designs. For a free copy of this planning guide--complete with scale drawings and cutting diagrams--send a postcard with your name and address to the Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Ask for MP-944.

When You Buy Poultry. To help you buy the type of poultry that will suit you best and will be the most economical, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has published a handy folder telling about its grading and inspection services, how graded and inspected poultry is labeled and what the labels mean. The leaflet, PA-170, "Know the Poultry You Buy," opens up to a full-color, 12 x 18 inch poster. For a copy, send a postcard to Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. A larger, 30 x 46 inch poster version is also available.

NEW PRODUCTS

Boneless Turkeys. Sliced turkey for a holiday party? Try a boneless turkey roll--fresh-frozen, ready to cook, and easy to carve. Pound-for-pound, no more expensive than a whole turkey. In Oregon, they also come molded like a whole turkey. The white meat forms the body, with dark meat attached on each side to resemble legs and thighs. Marketing specialists at Oregon State University, in a check on retail sales, note the boneless turkeys are selling well. This year more than a half million pounds will go on sale in the Pacific Northwest.

Fire Retardant Paint. A durable fire-retardant paint for outdoor use is well on the way. Developed by scientists in the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the new paint looks like ordinary paint. It can be applied with brush or roller. When exposed to flame, it develops a thick, carbon-containing layer that acts as a non-flammable insulating barrier.

All-Cotton Stretch Socks. Another new product of USDA research--all-cotton stretch socks. The new socks can be made in either of two ways: (1) by loosely knitting the socks from untreated yarns, then treating them with a solution to twist and crimp the fibers so the socks draw up to half their original size, or (2) by treating the yarn first, then knitting it into socks. A public service patent on both processes has been applied for. Licenses to manufacture the new cotton stretch socks will be available to industry on a non-exclusive, royalty-free basis.

Instant Pumpkin. First it was pumpkin flakes, now it's instant pumpkin powder. Powdered pumpkin, a product of U.S. Department of Agriculture research, is ideal for pumpkin pies. It only needs to be mixed with sugar, seasonings, milk, eggs and water--and you have a pumpkin pie that rivals any made from either fresh or canned pumpkin. When it comes on the market, pumpkin powder probably will be used mostly by restaurants, hotels and institutions. But it has possibilities, too, for home use.

SOIL CONSERVATION

USDA's Soil Surveys Move to Town. Urban planners throughout the country are stepping up use of USDA's soil surveys as an aid in avoiding hit-or-miss "urban sprawl" and at the same time coping with surging population growth. The November and December issues of Soil Conservation are devoted to the first hand experiences of planners and developers who are successfully using USDA's soil surveys and related land-use guides for everything from developing a residential community to locating a safe septic field. The December issue concerns primarily Lake County, Illinois, and how it is facing the challenges of urbanization and proper land use. Single copies of the magazine are available from the Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

HOUSING

Pure Water. Lack of an adequate community water supply at one time curtailed economic development of the Henryville, Ind., area. Families moved, and business requiring large supplies of clean water could not expand. Churches, schools and other community institutions all suffered the blight of scarce and polluted water. A loan from USDA helped change this. It financed pumping equipment, water lines, meters, storage tanks, fireplugs and the labor necessary to provide central water service for the community's 1,000 residents. For loan program details, send a postcard to the Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Ask for "Loans to Rural Groups," PA-560.

INSECTS AND DISEASE.

Border Guards. The U.S. Department of Agriculture plant quarantine inspector at the Mexican border--in a routine check--recently discovered some 76 pounds of heroin concealed in a "tourist" car. This was the second largest seizure of heroin ever made in U.S. history. Instead of heroin, USDA inspectors usually look for fruits that are known to contain pests and plants that might be disease infected. Entry of such plant pests and diseases could cause considerable damage to U.S. agricultural products and to ornamental plants, shrubs, and trees.

AMERICA'S WINTER PLAYGROUNDS

Skiing in a National Forest. Each year some 2,500,000 skiers take advantage of the 159 ski areas administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In other areas of the National Forests, you can also ice fish, toboggan, snowshoe, dog sled race, and sleigh ride. Or you can simply tramp through the snow and enjoy the sheer beauty of our mountains in winter time. For a list of the ski areas in National Forests, write to Forest Service, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250.